Pre-Convention Issue

SOCIALIST APPEAL

An Organ of Revolutionary Socialism

Vol. II. — No. 5 JUNE 1936 Price 10 Cents

FROM OUR VIEWPOINT

EXIT OLD GUARD

NO Sherlock Holmes is needed to discover that the New York York old guard has made preparations to take all its supporters out of the party and organize a new Social Democratic party. This could be seen quite some time ago by an analysis of the struggle which the old guard waged against the National Executive Committee. But it could be predicted simply as a deduction from the nature of the old guard and the inner logic of the fight between it and the rest of the party. Waldman and his comrades were careful not to give their hand away too early and nothing they said could be adduced as evidence of their definite intention to launch a party of their own.

Beaten at every point, their forces utterly routed at the primaries where they had hoped to score a signal victory, the members of the old guard threw caution to the wind and openly proclaimed their determination either to win the party for their sickly reformism or organize their own party. Of course they now assert that the New York primary settled no problems. As we indicated in the last issue of the APPEAL, we are also of the opinion that the verdict of the Socialist voters in the primaries is not the decisive factor. Its importance lies in the fact that the old guard is licked even under conditions where they should and did expect a victory. It shows clearly that even the sympathizers are with the left wing of the party.

Waldman had no recourse, after the trouncing the old guard received at the primaries, but to assert that "unless the national convention seats the New York delegation and the party ceases to be a wing of the Communist movement our conference (the Interstate Conference) will be the beginning of a new Socialist movement." And he made sure of not being misunderstood by saying in a telegram to comrade Laidler that "Socialists opposed to dictatorship and communism will organize independently to promote social democratic principles." (New York Times, April 19, 1936)

We can assume that after this clarification of issues any delegates to the national convention who inclined toward voting for the old guard will vote for the unity of the party by accepting Waldman's challenge. If a majority for the National Executive Committee was not assured before Waldman's open declaration we feel confident that it is certain at present.

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Whom will the old guard take along in their new Social Democratic party? Assuming that all those who participated in the Interstate Conference follow the old guard out of the party, all that we can say—gratefully—is "Godspeed." The advance the party will make by the mere leaving of the old guard and its adherents will be tremendous. And this can be said by all left wingers not only because the capture of control of the party by the old guard would mean the certain expulsion of any one who accepts the principles of revolutionary socialism but because it is as clear as daylight that the party would be nothing but a name if the old guard obtained control. It would constitute a serious, if not fatal, blow to the revolutionary movement and would, under present circumstances, throw many out of that movement.

As it is, with the exit of the old guard the party will ,it is true, lose a great many dues-paying members. BUT SUCH A LOSS OF MEMBERS IS AN ABSOLUTE PRECONDITION TO THE FURTHER GROWTH OF THE PARTY. The loss of the old guard and its followers will enable the party to turn its attention to the great problems confronting the working class and if the party seriously attempts to solve them on the basis of revolutionary Marxism there need be no fear whatever about the growth of the party.

There are thousands of workers who belong to no party, either because they can find no place in a mechanically controlled Communist party or because they could not tolerate the kind of socialism represented by the old guard. Our party must recruit all of these workers into its ranks. For every old guard dues-paying member who goes out we must and will bring in two active revolutionary workers. And that in a very short time.

Let the old guard organize its Social Democratic party and attempt to save a rotting bourgeois democracy—a democracy destined to be destroyed from the side of reaction unless the revolutionary proletariat led by a Marxist party succeeds in destroying it from the side of progress and instituting in its place a real workers' democracy.

LOVESTONE GOES OVER TO SANCTIONS

"CONFUSION reigns supreme in the ranks of international labor"..... etc. Thus begins an editorial by Lovestone in the WORKERS AGE. And by the time he finished in the subsequent issue of his paper (Apr. 26, 1936) he succeeds in doing his bit to add to the confusion.

Lovestone expressly comes out in favor of having the working class "make a demand on the League of Nations and the powers involved in the Locarno pact to impose effective sanctions against Hitler Germany for its activities leading to an attack on the U.S.S.R. and to an imperialist war of revenge." Is it possible that Lovestone is trying to leave a loophole by mentioning only the League of Nations and the Locarno powers? So that he can later claim, in the case of the United States, that he is opposed to sanctions? He is not so stupid as all that. He was simply not thinking things through.

If we are in favor of sanctions by any capitalist country then we must urge our own capitalist government to apply them. Otherwise we are simply advising the workers of a rival capitalist country to do what we ourselves are unwilling to do. And from the point of view of the defense of the Soviet Union, on the basis of the theory of the Communists, of the right wing Socialists, and now of Lovestone (we do not know whether the Lovestoneite group as such will accept his views) it is certainly necessary to have our own government, the strongest in the world, get into the fray.

There is no definite statement in the editorial that in case of a war against the Soviet Union by Hitler or Japan the working class of France and the United States should support their capitalist governments if they happen to be in an alliance with the U.S.S.R. But that must follow as the night the day. How can we urge a capitalist nation to apply sanctions against another capitalist nation without assuming the obligation, (in case sanctions lead to war, as they in all probability will) of actually supporting our capitalist government in such a war which is but an extension of economic sanctions? The whole logic of the situation will drive anyone in favor of capitalist sanctions to the policy of class peace during a war.

And all this after some of the Lovestoneites criticized so sharply the opportunist turn on the war question made by the Communist International. It simply proves that a group too close to the Stalinists in their fundamental ideas will be contaminated.

Lovestone did not leave the C. I. because of any fundamental differences with the Comintern. He bet on the wrong horse in the Stalin-Bukharin struggle. And after Lovestone was kicked out of the C. I. his group was given a chance, by the abominable mistakes of the Stalinists on tactical questions, to create a program based on those questions. The attitude of the Stalinists

on the trade union question, on the problem of the united front, and social fascism gave the Lovestoneites a chance to pose as the inheritors of Lenin's policies. Regardless of the fact that Lovestone and some of his followers were partly responsible for changing Lenin's policy on the trade union question.

Clinging to Stalin's skirts, hoping and praying that the "leader" may take them back to the fold, accepting the fundamental Stalinist theory of socialism in one country, it is almost inevitable that Lovestone remain within the theoretical orbit of Stalinism on all fundamental question, of which the question of war is the most important.

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Will the Lovestoneite group follow Lovestone in this sudden turn? They have at least been accustomed to some criticism, especially of their opponents. Will they use their critical faculties at this time on Lovestone himself? We sincerely hope so.

AT THE CONVENTION

UNFORTUNATELY the left wing will probably be unable to present before the convention resolutions dealing with the important problems confronting the party, which had been discussed and agreed upon by some representative conference of the revolutionary left. The struggle against the old guard, although fundamentally the result of profound differences on questions of policy, has been confined more or less to organization questions. In that struggle heterogeneous elements united and it was natural that differences of opinion between these elements be kept in the background. It was essential in the first place to rid the party of the old guard and permit it to function in a normal manner.

Since the National Executive Committee, partly because of the controversy with the old guard, has not prepared (at least up to the time of writing) any resolutions which could be discussed by the membership prior to the convention, it is reasonable to expect that at the convention a resolutions committee will present some hastily-drawn-up resolutions embodying different tendencies.

Undoubtedly resolutions on war, on the united front, and on a Farmer-Labor party will be introduced. The delegates representing the point of view of revolutionary Marxism (and they will be in a small minority) must not hesitate to present their viewpoint before the convention. On the question of war the danger in the party is not from the social-patriotic position of the old guard but from the social-pacifist position of numerous Militants. This danger shows itself mainly in the tendency to adopt the position of the conscientious objector and to advocate mandatory neutrality legislation. On the question of the Farmer-Labor party there will be a strong group, if not a majority, standing for some such combination as the Wisconsin Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation. On the question of the united front there will in all probability be a majority for a correct position. It is to be taken for granted that on questions of fundamental principle the revolutionary wing will not compromise.

FOR AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN

IF THE convention serves any purpose at all it must be as the opening gun in the 1936 presidential campaign. Any suggestion, any intimation that the Socialist party should not conduct its independent campaign this year is conscious or unconscious treachery to the party.

That the majority of the party members is determined to have an independent Socialist campaign is evident from the disturbing reaction created amongst the members from a misinterpretation of a statement given by Norman Thomas to the New York Times. Somehow or other the statement was misinterpreted to mean that comrade Thomas was opposed to having the Socialist party conduct its own presidential campaign.

That rumor was definitely buried by the statement which comrade Thomas published in the Call of April 18, 1936. In emphatic terms Thomas came out in favor of a socialist national campaign for President and Congressmen. On this question every revolutionary Socialist will support him.

What earthly reason can there possibly be to justify any Socialist in advocating that the Socialist party refrain from running its own presidential candidate and conducting an independent Socialist campaign?

Will there be a Labor or a Farmer-Labor party of real strength and importance conducting a national campaign this year? Only in the fevered imagination of the Communists is there such a possibility. Even if the Minnesota Farmer-Labor party should decide to initiate the launching of a national Farmer-Labor party and conduct a national campaign (something extremely unlikely) the Socialist party would not be justified in giving up an independent campaign.

But the fact remains that organized labor through its recognized leadership will attempt to drag the workers behind Roosevelt. If some kind of national Farmer-Labor party is created it will have no base in the organized labor movement. And the only possible justification for a Socialist party's refraining from running its own candidate, that it, its desire to stick close to the heart of labor and not to assume the risk of being blamed for a possible defeat of someone whom the workers consider their representative, will be absolutely non-existent.

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Should we participate in any kind of Farmer-Labor party campaign as a gesture, as a means of rallying all the forces in favor of a Farmer-Labor party so that we may lay the foundation for a real Farmer-Labor party in the future?

To pose the question in this way would show an utter lack of understanding of the nature and purpose of a Socialist campaign. That is the approach of the Communists who assume 1) that a Farmer-Labor party can solve the serious problems confronting the working class and 2) that therefore we must proceed to create a Farmer-Labor party even though it will be one in name only.

The fundamental purpose of a Socialist campaign at present is to build our party to a point where the workers, whenever they are ready to turn away from the capitalist parties, will recognize in our party the instrument through which they can wage a struggle against the conditions that oppress them. Taking advantage of the interest which millions of workers show in political and economic issues during a presidential campaign, the Socialist party must teach the workers the necessity for socialism as the only solution for their fundamental problems.

This does not mean that we should not have a platform of immediate demands. It means that we insert the most vital immediate demands into our platform and at the same time state clearly and boldly that these demands are merely a stepping stone in the direction of the taking over of political power by the working class and beginning the reconstruction of society on a socialist basis.

As against Roosevelt and his New Deal and as against a Communist-controlled Farmer-Labor party and its reformism the Socialist party must stress the necessity of socialism. The campaign must be primarily an educational campaign on behalf of socialist principles.

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Accepting the above point of view it is of course immaterial that we shall not succeed in putting our candidates into office. Nor is it even material if we do not get a huge vote. There are comrades who are afraid that we might not make such a good showing and that therefore it is inadvisable to run an independent campaign. They point to the formation of the Non-Partisan Labor League on behalf of Roosevelt and also to the fact that the masses will be afraid not to vote for Roosevelt lest a Republican reactionary will be elected. All this, even if true, would not relieve us of the obligation to run our own candidates, and attempt, amongst other things, to teach the masses that those who, like Hillman, Lewis and Dubinsky, plug for the election of Roosevelt are in actual fact preventing the organization of labor on the political field and thus aiding the capitalist class. We must not under any circumstances put on silk gloves in treating those labor leaders, especially ex-Socialists, who are tying labor to Roosevelt's chariot.

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What about local elections? In general the same policy should be followed with reference to local elections as in the national campaign. Wherever it is at all possible the Socialist party should run its own candidates in opposition to capitalist parties and "Labor Tickets." Concentrating as we should on the

broad issues confronting the whole working class and using those issues in connection with our campaign for socialism, the question of local candidates is a minor one. Wherever our presidential candidate is on the ballot there we are assured of the possibility of carrying on our agitation even if we do not succeed in putting local candidates on the ballot.

Without in any way committing ourselves we recognize that there may be an exception to the general rule in some rare cases. There may be certain localities where a bona fide Labor party will actually conduct a campaign on a local scale and where it would be inadvisable to run local candidates against such a party. We do not know of any such exception at the present moment.

But even in such cases the necessity for conducting an independent campaign on behalf of socialist principles is not at all done away with.

There is a difference between conducting an independent campaign and running our own candidates. The first we must **under no circumstances** surrender. The second is a matter of tactical consideration. Even where, for some reason or other, in certain localities is might be deemed advisable not to run our own local candidates or where, because of difficult election laws, it is impossible to get our candidates on the ballot, the obligation to conduct an independent campaign is not diminished by one iota.

Where our candidates do not appear on the ballot we can at best give critical support to any bona fide Labor or Farmer-Labor party. This means that we conduct our own campaign, on our own platform, criticising the program and platform of every other party and at the same time urging the workers to vote for the labor party candidates.

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By far not the least important reason for insisting on an independent Socialist campaign at the present time is the condition of our party. The old guard is leaving us and organizing a new Social Democratic party. This will take quite a few members away. As we explained above, that will not hurt the party. Nevertheless there will be a certain uneasiness in the minds of the more timid party members. By a vigorous campaign for the principles of socialism we can dispel that uneasiness; we can increase our membership to more than make up for the loss of the old guard followers; we can strengthen our party in numbers and in morals; we can begin the process of building it into an effective revolutionary instrument.

Revolutionary Socialists at the convention and in the party as a whole dare not for a moment compromise with any suggestion to refrain from running our own candidates and conducting an independent campaign for socialism. It should be our aim, within the next few years, to build a party so powerful that the necessity for any kind of Labor party will no longer exist.

Proposal for a Socialist Party Election Platform for 1936

FOR a socialist America! To this inspiring task, we summon the workers of city and country, the farmers and Negroes—all who are oppressed by capitalism.

Only a socialist America and a socialist world can give us peace and plenty. Look how the capitalist world totters on the brink of destruction:

War is no longer a fear but a grim reality. Italian imperialism is barbarically destroying the last independent nation of Africa, Japanese armies continue their savage inroads on the Chinese people. Hitler marches his armies to the Rhineland frontier. The "democratic" countries are equally warlike. Britain launches a gigantic naval program. France expands her powerful army. The United States is spending a billion dollars this year for war preparations—more than any other nation. As the last war demonstrated, America will inevitably be drawn into the next big conflict—if, indeed, the American government does not initiate it in the Far East.

Expressing the stark cruelty of degenerate capitalism, Fascist reaction spreads like a black spot across the map. Because the revolutionary working class does not more quickly solve the crisis of capitalism, frenzied sufferers are driven into the arms of fascist demagogues. When war breaks out and patriotism flares, the forces of reaction will be immeasurably strengthened everywhere. In America, Hearst and the Liberty Leaguers still employ the traditional methods of reaction; but soon enough they will link themselves to the demagogic program of a full-blown American fascism.

ROOSEVELT HAS FAILED

Four years of the New Deal have demonstrated the utter inability of the Democratic party to make good its promises. Hoover predicted that prosperity was around the corner; Roosevelt brags that it is here. Yes, prosperity has returned for the bankers, the mammoth corporations, the stock exchange sharks; the New Deal has rescued their investments and restored their profits. But the great masses of the people continue to suffer.

Under the NRA workers' wages rose but a fraction—and the increase more than disappeared in rising living costs. The AAA forced up the prices of food and clothing; drove thousands of sharecroppers off the land, and reduced the rest to perpetual hunger. Man produces more with less labor—but twelve million unemployed and their families are left to starve. Most of them will never be employed again under capitalism! The youth leave school condemned to permanent unemployment. Roosevelt has primed the pump so that capitalist profits again flow; he has left the workers in hunger and want and sickness and despair.

Seeking to capitalize upon the tremendous dissatisfaction of the people with the Roosevelt regime, the Republican party enters the campaign flanked by the Liberty League and the United States Chamber of Commerce. The Republican party has no program whatsoever, except to use the dissatisfaction with Roosevelt for reactionary purposes.

The two capitalist parties are as rotten and bankrupt as the system they uphold. They can maintain themselves and that system today only by piling additional burdens upon the people. For the future they offer only war, continued insecurity and increasing reaction.

THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM

The myriad evils of capitalism will disappear only with the destruction of capitalism and the building of socialism. The Socialist party dedicates itself to lead the workers of city and country forward to socialism. The struggle for socialism will be an arduous one, for the capitalists will not peacefully relinquish their power and privileges to the people, but only by wresting the state power from the capitalists can we begin the glorious task of building a new social order.

The Workers' State will do away with the anarchy of capitalism. Democratically-elected councils of workers in every industry and district will manage the factories and public services. The vast technological and natural resources of America will help us avoid the bitter years of construction which Russia's backward economy forced upon the Soviet Union. Freed from the fetters of production for profit, the splendidly-equipped factories will pour out their products without interruption; the productive forces will leap forward to provide almost undreamed-of plenty. No longer will cotton and wheat be plowed under and foodstuffs dumped into the sea to keep up prices! The unions of tenant farmers and agricultural workers will plow the soil in unison, released from back-breaking labor by every technical device that scientific ingenuity has already devised; while the small farmer, freed of debt and the middleman and insured against frost and drought, will be given every incentive to join his lands in common with his neighbor. The Hollywood studios, RCA networks, Hearst-McFadden presses, capitalist schools, will cease to pervert and will instead be made to serve a truly human civilization. The sweep of mountain and beach and countryside will become a playground and habitation for the people.

IMMEDIATE STRUGGLE AHEAD

In the fight of the workers for power and socialism they and their allies must gain strength and unity by their daily struggles against poverty and exploitation. To improve the conditions of life and labor and thereby to weld together the strength and solidarity of the masses, the Socialist party pledges itself to fight for the following demands. We will fight for them not only in the legislative halls but also side by side with the work-

ers in field and factory and office. Let us mobilize our forces in joint action to secure these elementary rights and vital social necessities:

1. Thirty hour week with no reduction in pay.
2. National system of social insurance;
   Unemployment insurance; old age pensions; accident compensation and sick benefits; continuation and expansion of the WPA; public works at union wages.
3. Passage of the American Youth Act:
   Educational subsidies; abolition of child labor; abolition of CCC camps.
4. Full social, economic and political equality for the Negro; smash the Jim Crow System!
5. Defend workers' and democratic rights:
   No restrictions on the right to organize, strike and picket; no restrictions on the rights of free speech, free press, free assembly; immediate release of Tom Mooney, Scottsboro boys and all other political prisoners.
6. Not a penny, not a man, to the military aims of the government:
   Unconditional opposition to any war engaged in by the American government.
7. Relief for farmers and farm workers:
   Moratorium on all farm mortgages; WPA and PWA **jobs for farmers;** no restriction of their right to organize.

In fighting for these immediate demands, we must realize that concessions can be wrested from capitalism today only by the sharpest struggle. Our party members, guided by the collective will of our party, wherever they are elected to office and legislative body, will mobilize the masses for struggle. They will expose every anti-labor maneuver of the capitalist officials. Utilizing the privileges of office, access to records and powers to investigate, they will lay bare the whole process by which government and "private" business are allied to exploit the workers and crush their struggles. The socialists in office will be veritable "tribunes of the people"—calling upon the masses to struggle against the daily hardships imposed upon them and to rally their forces for a new social order.

DOWN WITH ALL REFORMIST "SOLUTIONS"!

Always staunch supporters of the capitalist parties, the leaders of the American Federation of Labor, from Green to Lewis, are telling the organized workers to vote for Roosevelt. Unable to cover up the crimes of the Democratic party against the working class—the Democratic guns, clubs and fists, concentration camps and jails used against strikers—the Greens and Lewises make a fictitious distinction between Roosevelt and his party. But Roosevelt is the father of the arbitration boards that have strangled a thousand strikes, the author of the notorious "merit clause" in the auto code which put company unions on a parity with genuine unions, enemy of genuine social insurance and the thirty-hour work-week! He is as much a cog in the Democratic machine, as much an agent of the employers as any Democratic politician.

To make this enemy of labor more palatable, Lewis and "Labor's Non-Partisan League" for Roosevelt hint that their committee will be the nucleus for a Labor party after 1936. But every class-conscious worker should realize that those who betray him to his oppressors this year cannot lead him away from his oppressors next year.

Governor Olson of Minnesota attempted to supply a similar sugar-coating for Roosevelt. His state Farmer-Labor party called what purported to be a conference to discuss a Farmer-Labor party; but the chief forces brought together—the Olson and La Follette machines and the Lewis-Hillman bloc—all support Roosevelt! The Olson conference could be nothing but an auxiliary to the A. F. of L. move to line up the masses behind Roosevelt.

The most vociferous advocate of the Olso-Lewis Farmer-Labor movement is the so-called Communist party. This sponsorship is but one part of the present disastrous course of the Communist parties throughout the world. Following the new orders given them, the Communists are tying the labor movement to capitalist parties through socalled people's fronts, entering or supporting capitalist governments, obstructing the advance of the class struggle. In the impending world war, they have aligned themselves with one set of imperialist bandits against the other—with the so-called "democratic" states against the "fascist states"—thus repeating the crime of the last World War in which millions of workers were slaughtered "to make the world safe for democracy." That some of these bandit nations are tomporarily—anud therefore treacherously—allied with the Soviet Union, does not lessen the crime of the Communists. The only road to the defense of the Soviet Union is the road to world socialism and freedom: the overturn of the putrid capitalist system in all lands whether of the fascist type or garbed in a bogus democracy.

We, socialists, refuse to join the reformists in leading the workers into the camp of capitalism and support of the coming war. The intensity of the class struggle is greater today than at any time since the capitalists overthrew feudalism. Now it is the working class that must overthrow capitalism. The road to that great historic task does not lie through support of Roosevelt and capitalist wars and coalition governments.

The only road is the socialist road. Smash the decaying capitalism that breeds war and fascism, suffering and oppression. Forward, workers of America, forward to the new world that awaits us. Today it is the ballot that we use against capitalism. Vote, then, for socialism. Vote for the Socialist party, the only party that keeps the revolutionary banner unfurled and leads the masses in unremitting struggle for a socialist America and a socialist party.

The French Elections-To Socialism or Fascism?

By Albert Glotzer

"WE WISH to declare, without losing an hour, that we are ready to fill the role belonging to us—that is, to form and direct a government of the People's Front." With these words, Leon Blum, the leader of the French Socialist party, announced the intentions of his party on the morrow of the victory of the People's Front in the French elections. Blum continues: "The French people have signified their will with vehement emphasis. They will allow for no argument, no trickery, and will tolerate no resistance." And the Socialist Call of May 9th declares: "France's first Socialist premier will take his portfolio at a time when his (!) country is sorely troubled at home and abroad."

The importance of the above declarations exists in the following: 1. The People's Front, dominated by a desire to maintain a bloc with petty bourgeois capitalism in the form of the Radical Socialist party, will, under socialist leadership, attempt to organize the government which will not be proletariat in program, but in essence capitalist. In other words, we will observe once more, socialists in the role of governmental leaders of a capitalist economic social order. 2. The recognition that troubles lie ahead for the new government, without a precise statement of where the trouble lies and what form the impending struggles will take. And, 3. Blum's determination that the new government "will tolerate no resistance." What kind of resistance and against whom? For the moment, Blum leaves that unsaid. We propose to answer it for him and point out what must be done in France today.

The very existence of the People's Front, the character of the elections, are a result of the growing conflict with fascism and the menace of a seizure of state power by it. These struggles betwen the party of capitalist democracy and the working class parties on the one hand and the parties of reactionary finance capital on the other, reflect the deepening economic crisis of French capitalism and the intensification of the class struggle. The present skirmishes on the parliamentary field must ultimately find a solution through the victorious revolutionary action of the masses, or else succumb to the violent reaction of a fascist coup.

It is claimed for the People's Front victory, that it has delivered a fatal blow to the fascist advance, and because of this singlar fact, justified its existence. The joy in the ranks of the working class is quite apparent and it is genuine. On the basis of the educative material contained in the Stalinist press and our

own, they have become convinced that this election marks the beginning of the end of fascism in France. The danger of complacency and satisfaction in the struggle against the Croix de Feu, of an unquestioned faith in the theory and practice of People's Fronts, compells us to issue the warning: the victory of the left in France will result inevitably in the preparation of an armed coup by the fascists seeking to exterminate the working class. The ultimate physical conflict with the fascists in inescapable. The working class must prepare to cope with this inevitability by arming its own ranks and by seeking to solve the economic crisis of capitalism through the struggle for socialism.

It is a paramount lesson of the struggles in Italy, Germany and Austria, that fascism is an extra-legal force of reaction which relies in the final analysis upon its gangs of armed thugs. The parliamentary struggle against fascism is precisely the field of combat which decides nothing of fundamental importance. Parliamentary victories cannot and will not insure a victory over fascism, because it is an extra-legal force. Past experience demonstrates that a parliamentary loss or defeat of fascism not only does not effect their determination to seize power by an armed coup, but actually serves it as a barometer in matching its forces with those of the proletariat, and permits it to decide the most opportune moment to insure victory.

Two years of physical confict with the resultant extermination of the working class organizations finally assured Mussolini's victory. Between Hitler's appointment to the Chancellorship by that "lesser evil," the Junker Hindenburg, and the assumption to power by the Nazies, was a period of violent destruction of the immense German proletarian organizations. In Austria, the fascists planned beforehand their physical and armed assault against Social Democracy and defeated a surprised worker's militia. In Italy, with power in its grasp, the proletarian forces lost out by vacillation, indecision, and fear. Germany marks one of the darkest periods in proletarian history. Here the parties of the working class, Communist and Socialist, deliberately refused to understand that the struggle against the Hitlerites meant the arming of the working class and the opening of a determined united offensive against fascism. In Austria, the Social Democratic party contented itself with issuing highly inflammatory propaganda, without simultaneously organizing the social democratic masses behind these revolutionary threats. The conclusion finally drawn was, that if the parties of the working class had matched up to the situation, there would be no fascism in evistence today.

In France, while the concrete situation contains elements absent in previous historical experiences, the actual situation is similar in all its broad and general aspects. The insolvable capitalist crisis has given rise to the French fascist movement which will seek, as was sought elsewhere, to demolish the working class organizations, destroy their resistance to the capitalist offensive and attempt to solve the economic crisis by the organization of the dictatorship of finance capitalism.

What will happen in the coming period? Let us attempt a forecast. Reacting to the experiences of Germany, the French working class demanded unity in the struggle against fascism. The fear of fascism gave rise to that anomaly, the People's Front, as a substitute for revolutionary action. Composing the People's Front are tha Radical Socialists, that party of the French middle class, interested in the maintenance of democratic capitalism, the Socialist party and the Communist party. The purpose of the bloc is the maintenance of bourgeois democracy. For that reason, the People's Front serves the interest of the Radical Socialist party and not that of the proletariat. Without that aim, it would have been impossible to form the bloc with the Radical Socialists, who are neither radicals nor socialists. The French Socialist party, standing upon the program of a democratic solution to the French crisis, and giving lipservice to the eventual establishment of socialism, when and if the majority of the French nation will vote it in, was no obstacle to a union with the petty-bourgeois forces of French capitalism. To those who still conceive of the Communist party as a revolutionary party by past association, it must be said that this is no longer so and has not been the fact for some years. The French Communist party has become, as even so astute an observer as Edgar Ansel Mowrer points out, a "patriotic and conservative" force in French politics. Why then, should the Radical Socialists object to a bloc with the C. P., to whom the tri-color vies with the red flag, the Marseillaise assumes the importance of the International, and the maintenance of a strong military force for French imperialism becomes paramount? The answer lies in the very existence of the People's Front.

The Front has received a tremendous support from the mass of proletarians and a majority of the French middle class. There is testimony in this fact that the majority of the French nation is anti-fascist. The election victory however, is only a political one. More decisive that that is the necessity of an economic solution to the French crisis, which gave birth to the present political relationships. If that economic solution is not forthcoming the French masses are doomed. From a Marxist point of view there is only one solution to the capitalist crisis in a period of the universal decay of this social order, namely, in socialism. Therefore, in essence, the struggle against fascism must resolve itself in a battle for socialism.

There is no indication whatsoever, that the People's Front understands this or means to pursue a proletarian class policy. Quite the contrary, the People's Front is concentrating its endeavors upon a continued maintenance of the capitalist social order. The theory being: France is not yet ripe for socialism, the middle classes are against socialism and we cannot have socialism without the support of the middle classes.

If the French Socialist party, in bloc with or supported by the communists and radicals socialists, form the government, the responsibility for alleviating the economic crisis and improving the conditions of the impoverished proletarians and crisis-ridden middle class will fall upon its shoulders. The patent inability to solve the economic crisis of capitalism except through a further reduction in the standards of the middle class and the proletarian masses, points to the danger. The whole situation will play directly into the hands of the fascists. Finance capital is making and will continue to make more difficult an already impossible task. The surgeon of French capitalism will be the People's Front and it will attempt to cure a decaying organism.

The logical development out of this situation will be the growth of despair among the proletariat and the swing away of the middle class from the People's Front to fascism. That process, started already prior to and in the elections, will become more pronounced in the coming period. The fascist offensive, resting at this time on an armed force of nearly 700,000, will begin to gain momentum and the armed conflict, so studiously avoided by the working class parties, will confront them like a nightmare.

The middle class, it is true, is not a proletarian force. It has always been identified with capitalism. But it is not a basic class. Its well-being rests upon the foundation of a healthy capitalism—a condition now permanently absent. It is driven helter-skelter and crushed between the working class ranks into which it is driven and the ranks of the boureoisie which it does not deign to leave. It is a class that has to be won to the support of the working class. The existence of the People's Front is proof of at least this understanding on the part of the social democracy and the Stalinists. But the working class parties have to accept the understanding that the middle class has no independence and can play no independent role in the class struggle. It cannot direct the struggle.

The middle class can be won to the side of the working class only if the latter and its parties pursue a decisive course and demonstrate to the former that they really mean business. Vacillations, fear, blunders and finally, the inability to solve the economic situation will drive the middle class from the proletariat. The working class parties in France have at least this much in their favor at this moment: the middle class party has allied itself with them in a bloc.

The alliance can be maintained only if the proletarian forces march forward with decisiveness to realize the need of the hour: a solution to the economic crisis by a policy that will lead to the victory of socialism. The Bolsheviks of Russia proved the above by successfully conducting the revolutionary struggle against Czarism. Had not the middle classes supported them, they could never have seized and maintained power. It is because they demonstrated that they meant business, that the middle class came to their support.

In France, there is time now to prepare. If there is recognition of difficulties ahead, it is necessary to state that the

difficulties come from the fascists. If Blum wants to resist the reaction, he must first recognize that he will have to resist an armed force of fascist thugs. Once recoognizing this unavoidable fact, it is necessary to draw the conclusion: the only resistance against the reaction is through the arming of the working class and through the establishment of the worker's militia. This must be accompanied by such economic and political measures as will lead to the eventual establishment of socialism. That means the erection of soviets, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. The organization of a workers' militia and the adoption of measures leading toward socialism must be conducted simultaneously and coordinated into one vast offensive against fascism with the aim of annihilating this horde of reaction.

Waiting, playing the parliamentary game, trusting and relying upon the bourgeois army and police, operating under the legal limits of the bourgeois state organized for the political direction of the capitalist economic order, vacillating, failing to pursue a proletarian class policy—there you have the greatest assurance for the victory of fascism. Adopt the opposite course and you open up new vistas for the international working class. The crying need of the hour in France is the independent revolutionary assault of the proletarian movement—for socialism.

The Case Against Sanctions and "Neutrality Legislation"

By Harold Draper

MANY Socialists (and still more, pacifists) who oppose sanctions, are enthusiastic supporters of "stiffened neutrality legislation" by the U. S. Government—a ban on the shipment of raw materials, on loans and credits to either belligerent—i.e., a general embargo. Sanctions, they say, is a one-sided action, and therefore dangerous; a general embargo is impartially directed against all belligerents.

Now it is clear that the revolutionary workers cannot be neutral in the present conflict between Italy and Ethiopia; they wish to help Ethiopia to defeat Italy—thru their own independent class action. But altho the revolutionry party and the working class are not neutral, **it is their duty to insist that the government remain neutral**—that is, keep out of war. We are **not** for party neutrality, not for working-class neutrality, but emphatically we are for government neutrality.

It is precisely the absence of this distinction that is at the root of the present social-patriotic line of the Comintern: since in a war between the Soviet Union and its enemies, we (the workers) would be on the side of the Soviet Union, therefore we must support war by the U. S. if it is on the side of the Soviet Union.—But such a correspondence between the action of the working class and the action of the government can be had **only** when the class character of these two forces is the same—i. e., when there is a proletarian government.

In his debate with Norman Thomas, Earl Browder said: "A situation can develop tomorrow when German and Japanese fascism will proceed to attack the Soviet Union.... Will the militant Socialists adopt a position of neutrality? Will they advocate the slogan 'Keep America Out of War?' Impossible!"

We Socialists intend to do the "impossible"; in contrast to the C. P., we are for government neutrality. We must oppose any steps which would lead the U. S. into war. And if any legislative action could be proposed which would **really** help to keep the U. S. out of war, we should favor such "neutrality legislation."

The next question is: This general embargo on all belligerents which is being proposed under the name of "neutrality legislation"—does it **really** make for neutrality? Will it help keep us out of war?

Its proponents base themselves on the experience of America's road to the World War. If America had not sold goods and given loans and credits to the Allies, they argue, she would not later have been forced to enter the war on the Allies' side in order to make sure that her bills would be collected. A general embargo in 1914 would have kept us out of war.

This argument itself indicates its own first flaw. The same result could have been achieved in the World War, not by a **general** embargo, but by a one-sided embargo against the Allies, for the simple reason that the Allied blockade prevented us from selling goods to Germany anyway. Altho theoretically directed against both the Allies and Germany, its **effect** would have been that of sanctions against the Allies. If the executive committee of the American capitalist class (the government) had actually taken such action, it would have meant one thing: that the American capitalist class was tending to line up with Germany —nothing more.

General embargoes are impartial only in declared purpose, in theory; in practice they are as one-sided as sanctions.. This is necessarily so; for altho an embargo may be theoretically aimed in all directions with an even hand, the field in which it operates is always uneven, and therefore its net effects will be uneven and unequal. It is like a dynamite explosion: the explosive force is sent in all directions, but only the ground underneath gets dented. That is why it is a popular belief among blasters that dynamite strikes downward only.

Therefore, even if the argument from the World War were otherwise perfectly correct, here are the conclusions we should **really** draw from it:

1. It is a question of one-sided action, with all that it implies, whether such one-sided action takes the form of a nominal general embargo or openly one-sided action.

2. Such one-sided action can work for peace only if we know **in advance** toward which belligerent camp our own capitalist class is tending, in order to slap an embargo on that side. This assumes, first, that there is such a definite drift on the part of the capitalist class rather than a period of wavering before the actual decision and declaration of war; and second, that if this drift **were** definite, we would be able to know it for certain. For it must be borne in mind that if we guess wrong, or if the capitalist trend reverses itself, then our one-sided action will become a pro-war force, since it will be directed against our own ruling class's enemies.

3. Even if all the above assumptions were granted, we should realize that when we ask our imperialist government to take steps directly contraly to its own imperialist interests (the only case where, in the above argument, government action can be a force for peace), we are in reality asking the capitalist state to change its own character. The unorthodoxy of this viewpoint may be no deterrent to those who do not hold the Marxist theory of the state anyway; but it should be pointed out that another corollary of this viewpoint is that the phenomenon of war is not an inevitable outgrowth of capitalism, but is merely a malignant aberration which can be cured **on the basis of the capitalist system** if only there is enough "peace sentiment" abroad in the land to work for "neutrality legislation."

And in addition to all this, there is the fact that any such argument from World War experience is completely out-of-date, and would have no relevance even if all the above were not true. When the World War began, the U. S. had only taken a few short steps on the road of the extensive economic imperialism which characterizes it today. The U. S. was not then the creditor of the world. Its finance capitalism was not then so intricately and thoroughly entangled with international imperialism. That is why the U. S. in 1914 did not yet have so immediate a stake in the international situation as to be drawn in, then; but rather developed her stake only in the course of the war itself. But today, this is not true. Since the World War, the U. S. has become a leading imperialist power herself, and her stake in the next war has been, and is being, determined **now**, in the pre-war period of imperialist peace. In the very best case, to lay an embargo **after** war is declared would be to lock the stable after the horse is stolen; its only possible effect would then be to drag us deeper into the mire.

How does this general analysis of general embargos ("stiffened neutrality legislation") fit the present situation? The evidence shows that it fits completely.

1. The **Times** for Oct. 31, 1935, on recent statements by Roosevelt and Hull: "While they maintained the technical forms of an even balance of neutrality by warning American business men to engage in no transactions with either belligerent, the fact remains that American trade with Ethiopia is and always has been virtually non-existent, and a cessation of trade would therefore fall almost exclusively on Italy." In other words, the

actual effect of a general embargo is precisely the same as that of sanctions. The only difference is in **declared purpose**, which has no more weight against **actual effect** in the field of international relations than it has on any other field.

2. That this is so is shown by the fact that the loudest supporters of "stiffened neutrality legislation" regard it as America's way of imposing sanctions on Italy, of "cooperating with the League of Nations." The first witness is the liberal **Nation**, which is pro-sanctionist: "To withhold aid from Il Duce (to impose sanctions—H.D.) would not require a fundamental change in American policy.... action should be taken to extend the definition of 'implements of war' until it includes all the items covered by the League's sanctions." (Editorial, Oct. 16, 1935.)

Second, the **Times** editorial for Oct. 27: "Clearly, since Ethiopia, for various reasons, cannot purchase our raw materials and Italy can, we enable Italy to prosecute and prolong the war by our exporting them. Also we break down the effect of the League sanctions.... The situation calls for American cooperation with the League's peace effort by not breaking down the sanctions. The President can find authority in the phrase 'implements of war'." The **Times** ran several similar editorials.

Kellogg and Stimson, two former Secretaries of State, have likewise declared the identity of "stiffened neutrality legislation" with sanctions. The American Youth Congress, in its resolution, explains its support of such "neutrality legislation" by the fact that it constitutes a blow against Italy. I could mention many personal acquaintances who think of sanctions in terms of "stiffened neutrality legislation" and vice versa. It is no wonder that when the **Nation** ran a debate in its pages between R. G. Swing for sanctions against Dorothy Detzer for neutrality legislation, the latter ended up her "refutation" by declaring her agreement with Swing!

Certainly, American sanctionists would have been unpardonably stupid if they had not sought to attain their aim under the name of "stiffened neutrality legislation." In this crusade they find at their side many opponents of the word "sanctions"—but what difference does that make? Assuredly, we should not belittle the anti-war spirit behind these people who favor sanctions or "neutrality legislation"; but this is not the first case where "peace sentiment" is swept along by the war-current while it is fondly imagining it is battling upstream.

3. Not only do the proponents of a general embargo regard it as sanctionist but **so would all the other parties concerned.** Geneva would hail such action as a victory for the League sanctions system; Mussolini would gnash his teeth and be just as mad at us as if we had been honest and used the horrid word; the U. S. Government, if it took the step, would take it with the full realization that it was adopting sanctions. Nobody would be fooled—except the naive pacifists, who are always fooled.

4. The theory behind "neutrality legislation" is that altho the capitalist state may tend toward war, mass pressure by the people can force the government to take steps that make for peace. This theory runs up against a certain hard fact, which is also a basic characteristic of the capitalist state.

The steps actually taken which involve us in war are taken by the executive branch of the government; the people's pressure is exerted to secure the passage of laws—i.e., on the legislative branch, and need not affect the executive at all. The legislature is the cushion between the executive war-makers and the anti-war masses. This is an object lesson on how the separation of functions in the parliamentary system works out.

In the present situation, public "peace sentiment" secured the passage of the Nye "neutrality legislation." **And then the executive branch turned this very "peace instrument" into a pro-war force.** The **Times**, No. 1:

> "....events have proceeded far enough in the definition of United States policy to leave little substance for the neutrality resolution, because President Roosevelt has exercised his reserve powers to apply economic pressure on Italy as the aggressor. That is admitted to be the diplomatic significance of his several warnings to American business to refrain from transactions with the belligerents.
>
> "While the President has observed the letter and form of the neutrality resolution" his "broad interpretation" has in effect contradicted it.
>
> "That was admitted without reservation in official circles today.
>
> "The consequence is that President Roosevelt is aligned by force of events with former Secretaries of State Henry L. Stimson and Frank B. Kellogg, who have urged action calculated to brand Italy as the aggressor and stop the war....
>
> "It (Congress) will now engage in that task (more neutrality legislation) with a lively appreciation of the broad powers the President has in the conduct of foreign affairs, apart from any statutory authority vested in him."

Let us top off the total effect of "stiffened neutrality legislation" with this consideration:

We have said that the workers must seek to aid Ethiopia thru their independent action; and that one such means is direct aid (financial, medical, etc.) A general embargo, in addition to all the above, would prevent such aid from being given to Ethiopia; it would prevent (at least a part of) that working-class support which is our alternative to sanctions. Now surely, such aid by the workers' own resources would not involve us in financial and imperialist entanglements with Ethiopia or England; yet it would be cut off.

We must repeat again and again: it is a snare and a delusion to look toward any governmental action to prevent war. Let us not confuse and disorientate the workers with such "ways out." We must point only to independent working-class action—and in the final analysis, to revolutionary action.

Convention of Socialist Party of Illinois

By Rudolph C. Olson

IF ONE were to judge the progress of the Socialist party of Illinois within the last year simply by the report of the State Executive Committee furnished to the delegates at the Peoria convention held April 4-5, the situation would not be very encouraging. A decrease in membership was reported and under ordinary circumstances that would be an ominous sign. Taking actual conditions into consideration, however, the fact that the membership decreased so slightly is an indication that the party is at bottom a very healthy organism and is able to withstand a lot of punishment.

How can a party grow when it is convulsed by a constant struggle due to the determination of a small group of conservative Social Democrats not to lose complete control? It can be argued that in Illinois the militants were dominant but the answer to that is that ours is a national party and not a state party. Whatever affects one part of the organism is bound to affect the rest of it.

The period beginning with the Detroit convention and, we hope, ending with the Cleveland convention will go down in the history of the Socialist party as a period of transition. A period when old ideas were being discarded and new ideas not yet assimilated. A period of intense strike. A decrease in membership was invitable.

But in and of itself a decrease in membership is nothing to be alarmed at. A party which attempts to reorganize itself into an instrument of struggle must necessarily lose many members who did not join for the purpose of struggle. Such a loss is a sign of recuperation and growing health.

Should all of the adherents of the old guard plus the federations decide to make their exit from the party we would suffer a considerable loss of membership but we would gain tremendously in the quality of our membership and, what is more important, in the possibilities of attracting new members of the right kind. We must lose many members in order to grow.

* * * *

A change in procedure made the convention far more interest-

ing and instructive than the usual run of Socialist party conventions. Instead of killing the first day with useless speeches due to the fact that the resolutions committee is never prepared to report until close to the end of the convention, reports on the most important problems confronting the delegates were presented and discussed. Special reports were given on War, the United Front and the Labor party. Since draft resolutions had been prepared by a subcommittee of the State Executive Committee the delegates were in a position to discuss the questions much more intelligently.

This procedure can be improved upon by preparing the draft resolutions early enough so that the members can discuss them in their branches and instruct the delegates on how to vote.

Less important resolutions were prepared and presented by the resolutions committee in the usual manner.

* * * *

The convention adopted what can be termed a model united front resolution. Going on record in principle in favor of the united front the convention limited the tactic to such occasions where the attainment of a specific objective was desired. Permanent united front organizations with a theoretical program, such as the American League Against War and Fascism, were frowned upon. The united front is to be created for action and not for propaganda. The resolution also favors granting all locals of the S. P. permission to join any united front with any organization for the purpose of achieving an immediate objective. No unit of the party is permitted to join any permanent united front organization without the permission of the State Executive Committee.

On the war question the convention took a decisive stand. It wavered only on one important point, that involving individual opposition to any draft. The resolution adopted puts the Socialist party on record against every capitalist government, including its own, in case of any war. While declaring for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union it rejects the idea that the Socialist party can support a capitalist government because of a momentary alliance of the capitalist government with the Soviet Union. The delegates also went on record against supporting so-called democratic capitalist countries as against fascist countries.

Only a small minority of the delegates took a consistent revolutionary position that in case of a draft the individual Socialist must not go to jail because of his refusal to be drafted. If he goes to jail he must do so because of his anti-war activities no matter where he may be—in the shop or in the army. This does not mean that a revolutionary socialist should expose himself as such, immediately upon his being drafted into the army but it does mean that such a Socialist is in duty bound to be with the soldiers and not in jail where it will be impossible for him to carry on propaganda and to take advantage of the inevitable resentment endangered by the hardship of war. The majority of the delegates accepted the pacifist position of the conscientious objector. It is obvious that a great deal of education will be necessary before the majority of the members of the party will accept a revolutionary socialist position on that question.

* * * *

It was on the Labor party question that the convention stumbled. The majority of the delegates did not grasp the fundamental idea of Marxism that only the working class is the revolutionary force in modern society and that the middle class, including the farmers ,must of necessity play an auxiliary role either with the capitalist or with the working class. In favoring a farmer-labor party instead of a labor party the majority did not do so simply because it favored the use of the name "farmer-labor" on the ground that such a name would help labor obtain the support of the farmers. The majority actually thought that the farmers as a class must be placed on a basis of equality with the workers as a class. There was no distinction made between the individual farmer who might be just as good a Socialist as the individual worker and the farmers as a class which must at best be led by the working class. As a matter of fact there was a tendency to consider the farmers more revolutionary than the workers.

Nor was the concept that the Socialist party must under all circumstances be critical of the Labor party because of its inevitable reformist role understood by the majority of the delegates. Judging by the reaction of the delegates to the whole problem of a Labor party it is safe to say that should a Farmer-Labor party be created in the very near future most of the members of the Socialist party would have no reason for remaining in the Socialist party. The Farmer-Labor party would be sufficient for them.

At the present time there is not a single question of such great importance to our party as the question of our participation in a Farmer-Labor party. The great task of the revolutionary Socialists at the present moment is not to give way to the popular idea of joining any kind of a Labor party. Revolutionaries might be isolated momentarily because of their position on this question but to surrender to the prevailing mood of the party members is to help the party commit suicide. Above all must revolutionary Socialists fight for an independent election campaign in the coming presidential election. It is one of the great opportunities to build our party.

The Peoria convention was not at all clear on this question. The Labor party resolution was referred to the incoming Executive Committee for redrafting. It is to be hoped that the Executive Committee will not surrender to the confusion that prevails on the Labor party question.

* * * *

Members of the party who are consumed by an inordinate ambition to run for and get elected to office were given something to think about in a resolution dealing with the conduct of a political campaign. All candidates are instructed to stress the issues and to make a clear-cut campaign for socialism and not attempt to get votes by concealing their socialism. The Reverend Waltmire of Chicago was not mentioned by name but it is obvious that the resolution was aimed at the kind of campaign which he wants to conduct. To him as to all right wingers a political campaign has as its main purpose to get into office. The resolution takes the revolutionary position that a political campaign is only one phase of the activities of the party and like all other activities its aim must be to organize and teach the masses for the purpose of waging a struggle against the capitalist class.

The resolution dealing with the inner party situation was clear and decisive. It supported the National Executive Committee in all its actions and declared that only those of the New York members who registered in conformity with the N.E.C. decision were to be considered members of the party. Nothing showed the isolation of the old guard adherents more than the vote on this resolution. All they could muster were four solitary votes. After that these four made their exit.

* * * *

A convention does not build a party. It merely sketches the general direction in which the party should travel. If the activities of the Illinois party will conform to the spirit of the resolutions passed at the convention and if the national convention will act in the same way as the Illinois convention, it is safe to predict that we shall succeed in laying the foundations of a revolutionary party. And this will be certain if the number of dues-paying members will decrease during the next year by reason of the defection of the old guard and all its satellites.

SOCIALIST APPEAL
Chicago Editorial Committee
Ernest Erber — Albert Goldman — Rudolph C. Olson
Business Mgr. Rudolph C. Olson
1654 W. 67th St. Chicago, Ill.
Subscription rates: one dollar, 12 issues—50 cents 6 issues